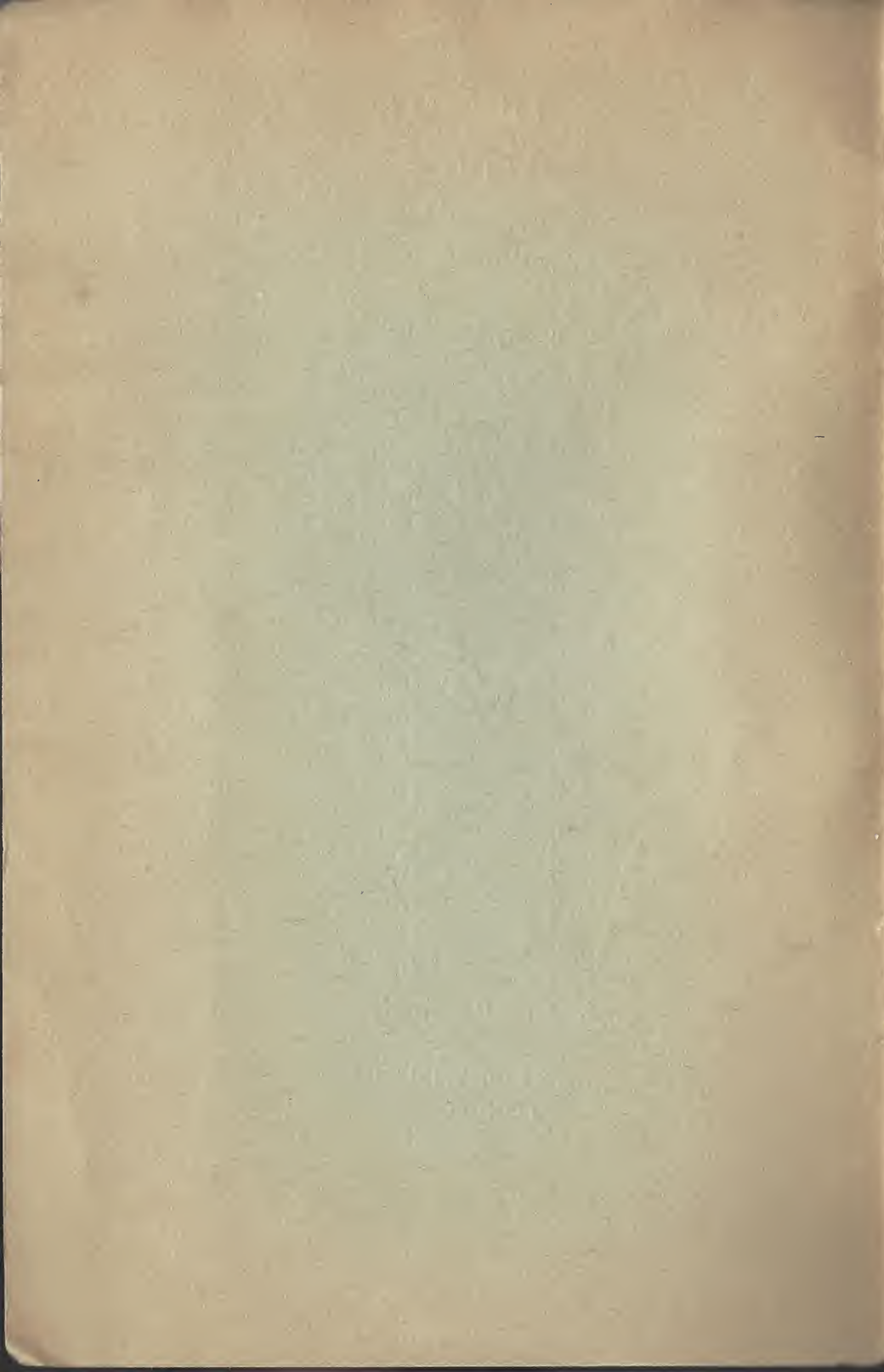


YIN FU
KING



SHRINE OF WISDOM
LONDON



#100
rev
2

YIN FU KING



Manual No. 18

Published by
The Shrine of Wisdom
Aahlu, 6 Hermon Hill
London, E11
1942

1877
11
21



1877

YIN FU KING

INTRODUCTION

The Chinese delight in ascribing great antiquity to their classics, and according to the Khein-lung Catalogue of the Imperial Library the author of the *Yin Fu King* was no less ancient a person than Huang Ti, the Yellow Emperor who is said to have lived in the twenty-seventh century B.C.

The extensive lore associated with the life and activities of Huang Ti is legendary in character.

As is frequently the case with the Venerable Ones of the past, marvels are associated with his birth. He was called, as are subsequent Emperors, "The Son of Heaven". His father is said to be the Thunder God, and his mother to have become pregnant after witnessing a brilliant flash of lightning. It is further recorded that his gestation occupied a period of twenty-five months; that he was born upon a mountain, and spoke immediately after his birth.

Undoubtedly Huang Ti was one of the most illustrious of the Chinese Emperors, for he is placed at the head of the five Ti, or sovereigns, who ruled in the dawn of history.

Legend records that on certain occasions he assembled on Mount Tai* a procession of strange monsters, including tigers, panthers and bears, and that these subsequently attended him at his royal palace and fought for him in battle. Yet he was so great a lover of peace that the phoenix rested in his garden.

His reign, which was a great and mysterious creative period, distinguished by simple yet true prosperity, is supposed to have extended from 2697 to 2597 B.C.

Flames and Winged Clouds are said to have been his officials. The performance of their duties was accompanied by ceremonial music, called: The Lakes, The Abyss, The Six Glories. The events of his reign, which mellowed into myth at its opening, were of a more historical nature towards its close.

* A sacred mountain in Northern China.

Huang Ti is reputed to have been a great benefactor of his people, having invented mathematical calculation, constructed a calendar, divided his empire into provinces, established musical intervals, taught the fabrication of utensils of wood, pottery and metal, directed the building of boats and wheeled vehicles, instituted a monetary currency, encouraged the cultivation of silkworms, and caused to be written a book on healing, entitled *A Treatise on the Interior*, which gave instructions for the prolonging of life. He exemplified the precepts of this work by himself living to a fabulous age; and upon his passing to the Celestial Kingdom the Feng or phoenix and the Chi-lin or dragon-horse are said to have appeared to mark the close of his auspicious reign. It is even recorded that at the end of his earthly life he assumed the form of a dragon and associated for ever with the Immortals. These legendary events may be considered as typical of the symbolic imagery in which the Chinese convey mystical truths.

Some authorities attribute the authorship of the *Yin Fu King* not to Huang Ti but to his teacher, Kuang Cheng Tsze, who, according to Li Hsi-yueh and other scholars, was a personification of Tao, and none other than Lao Tsze himself in a previous state of existence. If this be granted, the *Yin Fu King* obviously has an earlier place in the Taoist Canon than the *Tao Teh King* itself.

The following interesting passage from the writings of the Taoist, Chwang Tsze, gives an account of the relationship of the Emperor Huang Ti and his master: "Huang Ti had graced the throne for nineteen years, and throughout the empire his laws had been obeyed.

"Hearing that Kuang Cheng Tsze was living on the summit of the Kung-tung Mountain he went to see him, and said: 'I have heard, Venerable Master, that you are in possession of the perfect Tao; may I therefore ask you concerning Its essential nature? I wish to take the subtlest influence of Heaven and Earth to increase the growth of the five cereals,* the better to nourish my people. I would also control Yin and Yang for the benefit of mankind. How, then, can this be accomplished?'

* The five cereals, according to the Chinese, are: Hemp, Millet, Rice, Corn, Pulse. These correspond with Metal, Fire, Earth, Wood, Water.

"Kuang Cheng Tsze replied: 'What you seek to control is the Primal Substance from which all things are composed; yet this is already wisely divided.* During your government of the empire rain has fallen before the clouds have gathered, leaves have dropped from the trees before they have turned yellow, the sun and the moon have become pale, and the voice of the flatterer is heard on every side: how, then, should I explain to you the perfect Tao?'

"The Yellow Emperor withdrew, abandoned his throne, built himself a solitary hut, slept upon a mat of grass, and for three months dwelt in seclusion. Then he went again to seek the Sage and found him in a reclining posture with his head towards the south.

"Huang Ti approached him in submissive humility and said: 'I have heard, Venerable Master, that you are in possession of the perfect Tao; may I venture to ask you how I may govern my body so that it may continue to exist perpetually?'

"Kuang Cheng Tsze then suddenly arose and said: 'A good question. Approach nearer and I will tell you of the perfect Tao. Its Essence is hidden in the deepest obscurity; Its highest reaches seem as darkness and silence; It is invisible and inaudible. When It holds the Soul in Its arms in stillness even the body becomes pure. Stillness and purity are indispensable; do not weary your body, nor disturb your vitality, thus you will attain longevity. Unite yourself to That which is within; separate yourself from that which is without, for overmuch knowledge is a burden. By this method you may rise to the sublime height of Ineffable Light, the birthplace of Yang, and descend into the mysterious obscurity, the abode of Yin. In these two are the harmony of Heaven and Earth, and each includes the other. Dominate the body, and all things will contribute to its vigour. I preserve its primary essence while dwelling in harmony with externals. Thus have I regulated my actions for twelve hundred years, and my body has undergone no decay.'

"Huang Ti prostrated himself in reverence and said: 'In Kuang Cheng Tsze we behold a Heavenly One.'

"'Come nearer', continued Kuang Cheng Tsze, 'and I will tell you of the perfect Tao. It is Inexhaustible, yet men think It has an end; It is Unfathomable, yet men think Its limit can

* As Yin and Yang.

be reached. If It be lost the exalted will only perceive Its light as if from afar, while the unexalted will see but the ground. Now all existing things spring from the dust and to the dust return; but I will lead you through the Portals of Eternity into the Domain of Infinity.

“My light is the light of the Sun and Moon. My life is the life of Heaven and Earth. I know not who comes or who goes. Men may die, but I endure forever.”

The foregoing tradition regarding the venerability and inspiration of the authorship of the *Yin Fu King* gives some indication of the place it holds in Chinese thought, especially in the Taoist Canon.

The profound mysticism of *The Simple Way* of Lao Tsze, *The Classic of Purity*, and the other early Taoist works, has a quality distinctively its own. It touches the transcendent heights in the Unity of Tao Itself and yet in its wealth of imagery it uses the simplest things of everyday life to demonstrate its profundity.

For those who follow where it leads the Portals of Eternity will be opened, as Chwang Tsze tells us, and they will enter into the Domain of Infinity.

Most of the Chinese Classics have numerous and varied commentaries, and the *Yin Fu King* is no exception to this rule. Tradition records six ancient commentaries, namely, those by Thai-kung (12th century B.C.), by Fan Li (5th century B.C.), by Kwei Kuh-tsze, the Recluse of the Valley of the Tortoise (4th century B.C.), by Kang Liang (who died 189 B.C.), by Ku Ko Liang (A.D. 181-234), and by Li Khwan, of the Thang Dynasty (about the middle of the 8th century A.D.).

Of these works, however, only the last-named has been preserved, and later Chinese scholars even affirm that Li Khwan himself may have written the text as well as the commentary.

Li Khwan claimed to have found the manuscript in a cave where it had been for over three hundred years; and eminent Chinese scholars agree that if he forged the classic he must have been a second Kuang Cheng Tsze. All, however, are agreed as to its profundity, and the purity and antiquity of its teachings.

There are two translations into English of the *Yin Fu King*:

that of F. H. Balfour in 1880, and that of James Legge in 1891; both of these are out of print.

Balfour translates the title as "Clue to the Unseen," and Legge, as "Harmony of the Seen and Unseen."

In the title *Yin Fu King* the Chinese character Yin refers to the more manifest of the dual principles of the primal duad, Yang and Yin. It represents the female or receptive aspect of things.

Fu means a seal which is in two pieces. The genuineness of this seal is proved by the exactness with which these parts may be fitted together in a complementary manner to form one whole.

The two pieces are Heaven and Earth, the Above and Below, the Inner and Outer. These are in reality always perfectly integrated, for they subsist ideally in the spiritual realms. They are mystically in each other, operating subjectively and objectively in the perpetual outflowing and inflowing of life, of action and rest, of expression and reception, in perfect harmony.

In their expressions in mundane human life, however, the harmonious relations of the principles of Heaven and Earth are only partially realized. Consequently, until man learns to integrate their activities in his own inner and outer nature, he is tossed hither and thither on the constant flowing and ebbing of the two streams of natural life, and suffers therefore from many doubts and fears.

The Chinese character King simply means a canon or classic.

The purpose of this classic is to present us with a reconciliation of the two parts of the seal. The Below is unintelligible without the Above, and it is this integration of the one with the other which in veiled but thought-provoking imagery the *Yin Fu King* reveals.

With the aid of this classic the student may have the joy of fitting together for himself the two pieces of the seal, and thus of realizing in the only possible way something of its ancient mystery.

The text which follows is a free rendering from the Chinese edition of Chang Shih-Chun, and acknowledgment of indebtedness is made to the translations of Balfour and Legge. The commentary is by the Editors of *The Shrine of Wisdom*.

SECTION I

1. *To observe the Tao of Heaven and conform to the mode of Its operation is the term of all human achievement.*

The word Tao has various significations. It has been named "The Supreme Paradox", "The Infinite Truth which can never be uttered", "The Ultimate to which all things conduct us".*

In the *Yin Fu King* Tao is considered in Its aspect as the Way of Heaven, the Law, the Divine Providence and Inexhaustible Store, the Infinite Source of all that is.

One of the most sublime objects of human thought is the solution of the apparent contradictions of the operations of Tao, and the resolving in some measure of the mysteries of manifestation.

To observe the Tao of Heaven requires an exalted enlightenment. To conform to the mode of Its operations demands obedience to the Law of Tao.

Since man is a child of Heaven and Earth, essentially endowed with perfect principles, all men, without exception, may ultimately attain the term of all human achievement: Perfective-union with Tao.

2. *Heaven possesses five despoilers; and he who comprehends their operations will flourish.*

The five despoilers, or robbers, or plunderers, as they are termed, are the five subtle "elements" which operate in and through the manifested natural Heavens and Earth. They substand the gross elements, through the permutations of which all natural existences are produced.

Every element contains all the others in various proportions according to the peculiar nature of each.

They are "despoilers" in as much as they appropriate subsidiary natures for their own purposes. This appropriation is a necessary condition of growth and without it evolution and progress would be impossible. That which is used by superior

* See *The Simple Way of Lao Tszé*, p. 9 (*Shrine of Wisdom Manual*, No. 8).

natures is thereby transformed and enabled to participate in a higher and fuller mode of life. Thus the despoliation is only analogical.

Chinese thought abounds in fivefold divisions with numerous correspondences. It is therefore not surprising to find in its symbolism five elements, which are given the following correlations:

Wood	Fire	Earth	Metal	Water
East	South	Centre	West	North
Green	Red	Yellow	White	Black

The despoiling processes may be said to operate in the gross elements of the material world thus: Earth, which is the Centre, may be despoiled by Wood—that is by the implements of husbandry, which in ancient China were largely made of wood; the mineral is also despoiled by vegetation; Water is despoiled by Earth, the solid despoiling the liquid; Fire is despoiled by Water, which extinguishes it; Metal by Fire, which melts it; Wood by Metal, which is used in various ways to chop or divide it.

There is also a process by which the elements are generated from one another: Earth generates Metal in its inner caverns and recesses; Water generates Wood, being necessary for its very life; Fire generates Earth, as worlds are said to emerge from a molten state; Metal generates Water, by being resolved into its primal element; Wood generates Fire through being burned.

This is more easily seen in the following table:—

	<i>Generates</i>	<i>Despoiled by</i>
Wood	Fire	Metal
Fire	Earth	Water
Earth	Metal	Wood
Metal	Water	Fire
Water	Wood	Earth

According to "The Great Plan", as set forth in the *Shu King* (Part V, Book IV), "These elements fight and strive together, now overcoming, now overcome, till by such interaction a harmony of their influences arises and production goes on with

vigour and beauty"; and he who comprehends these mysteries "will in his wisdom flourish".

3. *The nature of Heaven belongs also to man; the mind of man is likewise a source of power. When the Way of Heaven is established in man his progress is assured.*

Because man has a nature akin to Heaven, as well as to Earth, he has also within himself an individualized source of intelligence and power, superior to nature, which gives him the capacity to know and follow the Way of Heaven.

Man, in his corporeal nature, is subject to the cosmic laws, but when he voluntarily conforms to the Way of Heaven he rises above these laws and his attainment of the heights is assured.

4. *When Heaven puts forth its destructive powers, the stars and constellations become hidden in the void. When Earth puts forth its destructive powers, dragons and serpents appear on dry land. When Man puts forth his destructive powers, Heaven and Earth resume their normal courses. When Heaven and Man exercise their powers in concord, the transformations of nature enter upon another phase.*

The Taoist writings abound in symbolic analogies. In this passage are depicted the opposite yet complementary modes of activity and rest which characterize not only Heaven and Earth but also Man and all things.

The powers of destruction signify the withdrawing of manifested existences into their essential natures, passing through the mode of rest which is the opposite of the mode of activity by which they are manifested.

The Dragons and Serpents symbolize natural principles or forces, which, having no physical existence, are unaffected by material changes.

Since man is the only factor which can interfere in any way with the operations of Heaven and Earth in nature, these resume their normal courses when man's powers are inoperative.

When Heaven and Man exert their powers in concord—that is when Man collaborates with the Laws of Heaven, employing his own creative genius through the splendour of his art—a new and mightier order is established.

5. *The five despoilers are also in the mind of man; but when he can direct their activities after the manner of Heaven, space and time are his to use, and all things are transmuted through him.*

The five despoilers or elements or powers of nature are within the mind of man as ideas; and by the exercise of the five virtues, with which they are analogous, man comes to ordinate the activities of his corporeal nature.

The five virtues and the five elements, according to the Chinese, have the following correspondences:

Propriety	Uprightness of Mind	Good Faith
Wood	Fire	Earth
Enlightenment	Benevolence	
Metal	Water	

When man has reached his ideal completion and acts always according to the virtues, then, even as Heaven moves with vigour and beauty in perfect harmony, so will he participate in the work of perfecting all spatial and temporal things, elevating and transforming them by imparting a perfection higher than that of nature.

6. *Man may appear either wise or stupid, yet one of these attributes may lie hidden in the other.*

The wise may sometimes appear to be foolish and the foolish to be wise. But in apparent foolishness profound wisdom may be expressed and in apparent wisdom, great foolishness.

The truly wise have always recognized their own foolishness compared with the wisdom of Tao; but the foolish fail to recognize their own ignorance.

The foolish of every age have sought to clothe the nakedness of their ignorance with bespangled and many-coloured garments; while true wisdom is clothed in simplicity.

7. *The abuse of the nine apertures of the body especially concerns the three which are considered to be the most important, and these may be either in action or at rest.*

The nine apertures of the body pertain to man's physical relations with that which is external to himself.

The three which are considered the most important are the ears, the eyes, and the mouth; the channels of hearing, sight, and taste.

Abuse of these results in exhaustion, restlessness, and satiety; but ordinate action and rest lead to vigour, serenity, and satisfaction.

It is by the interplay of the opposites of action and rest that variety and refreshment arise. This is the normal course of natural activity; yet all the senses should be subject to man's discrimination and will.

8. *When Fire is produced from Wood, if calamity arises from Fire the Wood will be vanquished. When evil arises in a state, and activities ensue, there follows disaster. Those who know how to purify and discipline themselves are named Sages.*

Fire produced from wood gives warmth which is beneficial, but when it is unchecked disastrous results may follow.

Evil in a state originates in wrongly oriented ambitions, desires, and thoughts, which when actively expressed may result in the disruption of the state.

But he who rightly applies the law of action and rest, wisely conducts the work of culture and refinement, for he knows by Wu Wei when to act and when to be inactive.

The Sage is one who has reached this state of perfection, and whose outward poise is the reflection of inner harmony.

SECTION II

1. *For Heaven now to produce life and now to destroy it is the mode of the operation of Tao. Heaven and Earth are the despoilers of All Things; All Things are the despoilers of Man; Man is the despoiler of All Things. When the three despoilers act in mutual harmony as the Three Powers, they will rest in tranquillity.*

The processes of increase and decrease in the natural kingdoms are expressions of the rhythmic activities of Heaven and Earth, operating in accordance with the fundamental governing principle of Tao.

Heaven and Earth, as the causes of these dual natural processes wherein what is produced at one time is destroyed at another, are the despoilers of all things. Yet behind the change itself must be the pattern and the law of that change.

All things in the manifested universe are the despoilers of man, because they constantly appropriate for their own use whatever they are able to take from him. In a natural sense

they may take from man his body; and in so far as they are the material cause of attachment to the realms of transiency they may be considered as despoilers in a higher sense.

Man, as the most dignified of all created things, is the despoiler of all things, using them for his own purposes, both ordinately and inordinately.

When, however, man observes the Law of Tao, and the three despoilers or powers thus work in perfect mutual accord, the Three Powers rest in tranquillity.

2. *Wherefore it is said: "During the time of unfoldment all the elements are adequately regulated; when the full energy of maturity is in motion all transformations serenely ensue."*

This implies that the plenitude of maturity is essentially contained even in the very beginnings of every manifested thing; and that there is an ordered progression through every stage of unfoldment.

Even the analogical despoiling of all things by Heaven and Earth is an exemplification of this law.

When the three despoilers operate according to the Law of Tao, the evolution of the cosmos proceeds serenely and all natural processes move towards their consummation.

3. *Days and months have their determinate times; greatness and smallness, their precise extent. The worth of the Sage thus becomes apparent, and spiritual intelligence is revealed.*

The merits of Sages and their spiritual intelligence become apparent through their capacity to perceive and act in conformity with the ideal cosmic periods and the true measure of things.

4. *The motive power of the three despoilers is invisible and unrecognized by the generality of men. When the superior man receives it he is enabled to invigorate his body; but when the inferior man receives it he makes light of his life.*

The power which moves all things in the universe is only apparent through its operations.

The superior man uses his knowledge of this hidden power as a source of strength, realizing that his earthly body should be the servant of his heavenly nature.

When the inferior man knows that there is a hidden power upon which he can draw he uses it carelessly, not appreciating its value, and thus makes little real use of his life, pursuing things of earth instead of those of Heaven.

SECTION III

1. *The blind have intensified bearing; the deaf have intensified sight; Concentration in a single source is ten times more beneficial than the employment of a scattered host. Concentration thrice repeated in the day and night is better a myriad times.*

This is an exemplification of the advantage of concentration and centralization, and of unwearying persistence.

Tao is the heart and centre of all things. It is the source of Its own activity, and Its power is limitless. In It, Actor, Action, and Act are self-contained.

In so far as human acts are the results of a unific spiritual purpose, they become increasingly efficient; while many diverse activities disperse man's energies and lead away from the Goal.

The thrice-repeated concentration is valuable in impressing the memory in a threefold manner with spiritual truths.

The persistent daily practice of the dominance of man's heavenly nature over his earthly nature leads to the highest efficiency.

2. *The mind is stimulated by manifested things, but is deadened through overmuch identification with them. The fountain of the mind's operation is in the eyes.*

This passage deals exclusively with external perception and its results. The mind is stimulated to thought by the sight of natural things, but if it identifies itself too vehemently with them its higher powers are deadened.

The eyes, as one of the chief of the senses, are used to typify the portals by means of which external perceptions stimulate the mind.

3. *Though Heaven has no particular feeling of benignity, the most gracious consequences are the result of its activities; even the crash of thunder and the blustering wind may have a vitalizing effect.*

The operations of Providence are impartial, and although

man may not always find the results of these operations pleasing to him, they are essentially beneficent and for the ultimate good of all beings; for Providence is rooted in Tao and all things are under Its benign care.

Even the dissonances of nature have their part in the universal harmony and contribute to the perfection of the whole. Man, too, gains moral strength through the endurance of calamities.

4. *Perfect enjoyment consists in the abundant satisfaction of the nature. Perfect tranquillity consists in being satisfied with little.*

Enjoyment is here contrasted with tranquillity. Enjoyment may be said to be of Yang, the Principle of Activity; and tranquillity to be of Yin, the Principle of Passivity.

There is an abundant satisfaction in the nature which is tranquil, and a contentment with little which gives a richly flavoured enjoyment.

Even as Yang and Yin are united in Tao, so perfect enjoyment and perfect tranquillity are united in the Middle Path travelled by the servant of Tao.

5. *When Heaven seems most indrawn, its activities are most universal in their nature.*

Within and behind even the simplest things of life are great and profound mysteries. The physical eyes of man behold only the external effects, but the causes are hidden in the Laws of Heaven. The higher the cause the more hidden it is, yet the more universal is its sphere of operation.

Behind and above the Laws of Heaven is the Supreme Law of Tao, which is even more profoundly hidden.

As it is written in the *Tao Teh King*. "Tao appears quiescent; Its activity is all within, yet there is nothing It does not do."

6. *The laws affecting the animal creation reside in Ch'i.*

The Chinese word *ch'i* cannot be adequately translated by any single term, for it has a variety of meanings dependent upon the context.

The character *ch'i* is a composite of the characters "vapour" and "rice", and the literal meaning is: Vapour ascending from heat acting on moisture. It is sometimes translated as breath, air, and even as matter.

Philosophically, however, it has deeper meanings, and is said to be the source or primary agent for producing or modifying motion, and in this sense may be termed Vital Breath.

Suzuki, in his *History of Chinese Philosophy*, calls it the nervous system of the macrocosm, and says that the word can be freely translated as universal energy, or the impulse that awakens, stimulates, and accelerates activity. He gives as an example a quotation from Kwan-yin-tsze: "All things change, but their *ch'i* is always one. The wise know this oneness of things and are never disturbed by outward signs."

Giles defines *ch'i* as "The vivifying principle of Chinese Cosmology."

In yet another aspect *ch'i* may be considered as pre-elemental or primordial matter, and even as the subjective life from which all animation springs.

Thus *ch'i* is both physical and super-physical. As unmanifested it is not subject to modification: as manifested it modifies all existing things.

The creation of a universe is said to begin with the rotation or vortex of *ch'i*, by which the two modes of Energy and Inertia are produced.

The Dual Powers, Yang and Yin, are termed the *Two Ch'i*.

The philosopher Chu Hsi states that "Natural formae are not separate things: they manifest at the centre of matter (*ch'i*), and if matter (*ch'i*) did not exist they would have no place of attachment."*

7. *Life is the root of death; death is the root of life. Beneficence springs from injury; injury from beneficence.*

This implies that in the realms of duality opposites are rooted in each other, producing one another in a continually alternating sequence, according to the successive dominance of the two modes of procession and return, by which all natural existences are subject to birth and death, injury and healing.

A consideration of the limitations of these processes kindles in man a desire to escape from the restrictions, pain, and sorrow which these conditions bring. He cannot, however, find release in going from one extreme to the other; he must rise above the

* See *Ideas and Matter, Shrine of Wisdom*, No. 38, page 47.

pairs of opposites into that realm where duality and discord are unified and resolved into harmony.

This may be accomplished through union with Tao; and, as is written in the *Tao Teh King*: "To find the Ancient Tao is to control the affairs of the present day; to know the Ancient Beginning is to have found the Path to Tao."

8. *If stupid men study the Laws of Heaven and Earth they may become wise; I, by studying the science of seasons and things, become enlightened. Those who fear stupidity become stupid; I, because I do not fear stupidity, am wise. Others regard their knowledge as wisdom; I do not regard mine as such. Wherefore it may be said that those who drown themselves in water in order to extinguish a fire, bring about their own destruction.*

These sayings indicate the outlook of the Taoist Sage in his approach to life. His attitude is an exemplification of the practice of *Wu-Wei*, mystical non-striving. By refraining from excessive outward action and dwelling in Tao, all things are noiselessly accomplished, and wisdom is attained because external hindrances are transcended.

One of the Chinese comments on this passage is as follows: "The minute investigation of the science of Heaven and Earth suffices to confer a knowledge of height and depth; the minute investigation of the science of seasons and things suffices to confer a knowledge of what is subtle and diminutive. Though others always pursue their researches among the distant, I pursue mine amid the near. This is quite sufficient, the near being the necessary condition of the distant. Wherefore, those whom others may call wise, I regard as stupid. In cases where the extreme summit of all doctrine has been reached, the epithets 'wise' and 'stupid' should both be abjured. Thus there are among men those who follow stupidity and those who aim at wisdom; but I neither pursue the one nor seek the other. Abiding neither in stupidity nor wisdom, I also rest not in mere cleverness. The place where my mind is at ease is outside both stupidity and wisdom; it is in the contemplation of time and things that I penetrate the mysteries of the Sublime. How, then, can I run counter to those mainsprings of action which exist in the world around me? Let the superficial manifestation of wisdom and stupidity be once seen and the injury inherent in both will be experienced. The one will plunge men into water

and the other throw them into fire, so that in either case they will come to an untimely end."

9. *The Tao of Spontaneity unfolds Itself in stillness, and it is after this manner that Heaven and Earth and all things are produced.*

The Tao of Spontaneity is the Providential Energy within and above the natural activities of creation. It proceeds in stillness, acting subjectively and without process of any kind; yet It is the cause and sustaining life of all things.

"Tao is tranquil and still, yet the source of never-ending activity."

"Tao is the Plenum and yet also the Void."

From Heaven and Earth all things in the manifested universe are produced, yet in the Mother-Deep they abide serene and changeless.

10. *The Tao of Heaven and Earth operates with gentleness and with measured continuity. When Yin and Yang alternate with each other the pulsations of the universe manifest in an evenly measured rhythm. The Sage, therefore, knows that the Tao of Spontaneity cannot be overthrown, and by acting in accordance with It he advances in the inner life.*

When man ponders upon the Tao of Heaven and Earth he is increasingly impressed by the marvellous order expressed in the regularity and perpetuity of all cosmic activities.

Although Yin and Yang are opposites, yet their interactions are always complementary and never contradictory.

As a Chinese commentary says: "The Yin appears to be antagonistic to the Yang, but if the principles of gradualness be brought into play the opposition of the two will be forgotten. The Yang is entered from the Yin, and the Yin from the Yang, yet both are one in Tao. And how is this? It results from the circularity to which Heaven conforms its external shape. Heaven is circular: circularity is the condition of its stability. All things thus revolving in a circle, each gets nearer to the other the further each one goes."

The wisdom of the Sage consists in the discovery of the Way of the Tao of Spontaneity, the Universal Rhythm, which is above all opposites, and in which they equiponderate. Having found this precious treasure, he knows the folly of opposing it, and so acts in perfect harmony with its way.

11. *The Way of Perfect Stillness cannot be measured by numerical calculations. Yet there must be a mysterious super-cosmic power from which have sprung the Myriad Simulacra, the Eight Diagrams, the Sexagenary Cycle, the Natural Springs of Power, and the hidden Astralia. The mysterious operations of the Yin and Yang in the victories of the one over the other, manifest in brilliant visibility.*

The Way of Perfect Stillness, the Way of Tao, is limitless, and thus immeasurable; yet from it are reflected into the kingdoms of nature the five components of manifestation: the Myriad Simulacra, or Types, or Patterns, according to which all things are fashioned; the Eight Diagrams or subdivisions of the Yin and Yang*, with their relationships to the points of the compass and the vast sweep of space; the Sexagenary Cycle, or division into sixty, in the measures of time; the Natural Springs of Power, governing the motion of all things; and lastly the hidden Astralia, beneath and interpenetrating all natural existences, passively recording the activities of all above it.

"We may call this wonderful," says the Chinese commentary, "but the word wonderful is insufficient." Ultimately words fail to describe the indescribable; they can only signify certain of its attributes.

In the realization of the Way of Perfect Stillness the Soul rests serenely on the bosom of the Tao of Heaven, where the two parts of the Great Seal are eternally united. Abiding in that state of bliss, she perpetually manifests all her heavenly powers in spontaneous and harmonious activity.

"When a certain destination has been reached, and the person so reaching it then passes beyond it: this is termed truly advancing."

* See *Shrine of Wisdom*, No. 60, pages 325-6.

PRINTED IN GREAT BRITAIN
BY UNWIN BROTHERS LIMITED
LONDON AND WOKING

